



State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan 48913
517/373-7888
1-888-937-4453
517/373-2983 (fax)
sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov

GILDA Z. JACOBS
MICHIGAN SENATE
ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC FLOOR LEADER
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

Committees
Economic Development, Small
Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
Government Operations
Health Policy

The Jacobs Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, April 30, 2004

CONTACT: Matt Levin
(517) 373-7888

RACINO BILL WINS NARROW VICTORY IN SENATE

By a narrow 20-18 tally decided in the vote's final seconds, the Senate passed legislation that would allow slot machines at Michigan's race tracks. HB 4610 now returns to the House, where it is expected to stay only briefly before referral to a House/Senate conference committee.

HB 4610 had been lingering in the Senate Gaming and Casino Oversight Committee for nearly a year since passing the House last May. Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) surprised many in the chamber by allowing the bill to be discharged from committee onto the floor.

Governor Jennifer Granholm announced at a press conference she would veto the measure if it came to her before the 2004-05 budget is completed, saying she did not want "people to take the easy way out" and rely on expanded revenues from gaming to balance the books.

"I've said repeatedly that I do not want to see a racino bill before we can get the budget done," said the governor. "We need to be responsible and make the cuts in the budget and approve the revenues necessary."

Because the legislation is actively supported and opposed by various interest groups, the Senate-passed chrysalis of HB 4610 is considered a work in progress. Compared to the House version, the Senate version is far more restrictive in terms of overall regulation and allows for a smaller payout to the tracks with more revenues going to the state, local governments and for treatment of problem gambling. Now with the bill primed to go to a conference committee, the Executive Office will also be involved in compromise negotiations.

Senate debate over HB 4610 comprised most of the day's session. Opponents argued that the passage of such legislation comes with moral consequences. Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) sardonically suggested that Michigan should change its welcome signs at the borders to read: "Welcome to Michigan, the Las Vegas of the Midwest."

Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) put the argument into a different perspective. "Ladies and gentlemen, we may disagree on whether gambling and gaming is immoral, but let it be clear that it is not illegal in recognized establishments," she said. "If any of you truly think gaming revenue isn't worth its moral costs, where's the bill to eliminate Keno and the state lottery? You cannot pick and choose which gaming is moral and which is not," she added, noting that 33 senators recently voted to expand the lottery in Keno and pull-tab games. Only one voted against the measure last July.

--more--

Senate Minority Leader Bob Emerson (D-Flint) said that he was supporting the bill because it could help the state's budget and expressed regret that legislators would not vote for more rational ways for the state to raise money. Mr. Emerson called the bill "a lousy way to raise revenue, but it may be the only one we get now or in the near future."

The bill would allow each of Michigan's pari-mutuel racing tracks to be licensed for 500 slot machines through the state's lottery act. The Senate version would not allow, as the House did, for off-track betting, Internet gambling, or telephone wagering.

ABSTINENCE BILLS PASS SENATE

Schools with sex education programs would have to stress abstinence under two bills that passed in the Senate this past Tuesday. SB 944 and SB 943 passed the chamber on 31-7 and 30-8 votes respectively.

Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) said while there already is a requirement in the school code to teach abstinence, it is not effective.

Sen. Irma Clark-Coleman (D-Detroit) disagreed, calling the bills unnecessary. "We have an effective sex education and communicable disease statute on the books," she explained. "We already require districts to include abstinence in their local instruction. It is current law." Calling the bills "a solution in search of a problem," Ms. Clark-Coleman added that, "I am concerned that the real reason these bills are being pushed is to make it more difficult for local districts to develop sex education programs. And with that difficulty, more districts will simply not offer sex education programs. That may be the real agenda behind these bills, and I am opposed to that. Although these bills have been amended somewhat, the fact is that you can put lipstick on a pig and it's still a pig."

Sen. Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods) assailed the two-bill package for being out-of-touch. "Whether we like to acknowledge it or not," she said, "statistics show that teenagers are engaging in sex. As currently worded, the legislation put forth in Senate Bill Nos. 943 and 944 does not address this hard reality, nor does it advocate making sure that teenagers understand how to act responsibly if they do experiment in sexual activity. To force a narrow definition of what a certain segment of society feels is the sexual norm is a draconian effort to limit the expression of the individual."

The legislation now moves to the House.

GOVERNOR GRANHOLM APPOINTS JOB PROTECTION TASK FORCE

This week, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm appointed a task force to help protect thousands of Michigan jobs by avoiding the closure of military facilities in Michigan during the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process authorized by Congress. The BRAC process is expected to result in 20 to 25 percent fewer domestic military facilities across the United States.

"This effort is about protecting our homeland security and protecting our job base," Granholm said. "Michigan's military facilities have a much deeper impact than we sometimes realize. They provide jobs, not just for military families, but in the local communities where they are located. They are also a key link in our homeland security chain.

"This task force will be instrumental in working with those local committees and local communities across the state to ensure that we do everything within our power to retain the military facilities in our state," Granholm added.

The task force will be marshalling efforts to keep all of the military facilities in Michigan open. It is charged with ensuring that local BRAC groups are convened and moving forward; providing local BRAC

groups with background information and updates on the BRAC process; assisting with research and analysis that might be needed by the local groups as they prepare their reports; facilitating lobbying efforts; and other support as necessary and appropriate.

Co-chairing the Governor's Task Force to Protect Michigan's Military Facilities are Brigadier General Robert Mansfield, Jr. (Ret.) and Robert Truxell.

Mansfield is a retired Brigadier General with the U.S. Air Force who was Commander for the Reutilization and Marketing Service at the Defense Logistics Agency in Battle Creek. He is currently employed by Altarum. Truxell retired as vice president of General Motors' Truck and Bus Group in 1983. In 1991, he retired from General Dynamics where he was vice president in charge of the Land Systems Division. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

####